

Questions for RFP PR-HQ-02-11865

August 21, 2003

1. Section L.20e contains special instructions for labels and packaging of the proposal. It indicates that mailing labels can be found at www.epa.gov/oam under Special Interest. There is no Special Interest item located at this location. If this section contains incorrect information, could you please provide corrections and your desired instructions pertaining to labeling and packaging of the proposal to ensure successful proposal delivery?

Response: The RFP will be amended to delete references to mailing labels on the EPA web site. Offerors should use the mailing and hand carry addresses listed in that same provision, and observe the limitations placed on boxes transporting offerors' proposals.

2. **Technical Experience Approach:** The title of this chapter indicates the desire for the contractor to provide experience and approach information, yet the requirements specified in section M.4.1, and L.11.A.C.1 only focus on experience. Would you like to see a technical approach in this section as well as technical experience? If so, given that the current criteria focus on multiple dimensions of work (e.g., process, activities, functions, technical subject areas) and the work could require expertise in anything, what do you want a technical approach for?

Response: Offerors may demonstrate technical approach when responding to the three (3) sample Work Assignments.

3. Should we just interpret items that say *experience* as meaning experience and ability as meaning approach?

Response: Technical Approach may be demonstrated in the responses to the Sample Work Assignments.

4. Section M.4.1 and L.11.A.C.1 indicate that contractors will be evaluated on their ability to perform all activities described in the SOW including: Policy analysis, including economic and scientific issues, data gathering, facilitation of discussions among diverse groups and interests, program evaluation, public communication, both written and electronic, information management technical support for electronic and Web-based communications, and meeting support. Many of the items specified in the including list do not appear as activities in the statement of work. Activities that do appear in the statement of work are inconsistent in the work breakdown structure level (some are the primary activity others are sub-sub-activities, 1.0 or 1.1.1 in an outline format). Should we respond to the items listed or the activities identified in the statement of work?

Response: Offerors should address the information contained in the technical evaluation criteria and the Statement of Work.

5. Section M.4.1 and L.11.A.C.1 indicate that contractors will be evaluated on their proficiency in policy design and analysis, program evaluation, preparation of communications materials, facilities and organizational change. What criteria does EPA plan on using to evaluate proficiency under this chapter?

Response: The areas stated above will be evaluated under the criterion entitled Technical Experience and Approach.

6. The RFP lists October 1, 2003 as a start date for the contract. Given the amendment extending the due date for the proposal, does EPA still anticipate an October 1 start date?

Response: For proposal purposes, offerors should use January 5, 2004 as an anticipated start date for the contract.

7. In lieu of the Quality Management Plan contents included in Management Approach, L.11.A.C.2, can an offeror submit a Quality Management Plan that conforms to EPA QA/R-2 (March 2001), "EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans" and have that Quality Management Plan be evaluated against EPA QA/R-2 in lieu of M.4.2?

Response: Offerors should prepare a Quality Management Plan in accordance with the instructions contained in Provision L.11.

8. In partial response to L.11.A.C.2, if an offeror submits an organizational Quality Management Plan as an appendix, can this organizational Quality Management Plan be excluded from page count limitations? Also, can the Conflict of Interest Plan mentioned at L.21 be submitted as part of the Solicitation Set?

Response: The RFP is amended to state that the offerors' Quality Management Plan and Conflict of Interest Plan are NOT subject to the page count limitations. The COI Plan may be submitted with the Cost Proposal.

9. The technical approach requires that we identify and provide experts as required for purposes of Web-based dialogues. Does the Agency anticipate the potential fee for such experts will be covered by the contract resulting from the solicitation?

Response: Yes, such experts will be acquired through the resulting contract.

10. How the 35 points for the Technical Approach and Experience section (page M-2 of 6) will be divided between the response to the Sample Statement of Work and the 3 work plans that need to be developed (20+5+5+5 or 5+10+10+10, etc.)?

Response: No further breakout of the 35 points by subcriteria under Technical Experience and

Approach is contemplated, however, offerors may assume that all three of the Sample Work Assignments are of equal importance.

11. Amendment 1: The amendment calls for an extension until 9/3/2003, however, block 11 suggests that proposal due date is not extended. Please clarify.

Response: This comment is noted. Amendment 0003 will reflect the correct information in Block 11, and will reflect an additional extension through September 19, 2003.

12. The RFP seems silent regarding the Volume of the Proposal in which the following items are to be included. Please confirm that we may include these in our Cost Volume (a typical practice) and that they are not subject to the page count limitation for the Technical Management Volume.

- a. Subcontracting Plan (L.18)
- b. Conflict of Interest Plan (L.21)

Response: Your assumptions are correct.

13. Amendment 0001 to the RFP includes a requirement that page one of the past performance questionnaire be included for each past performance reference. The Q&A further stipulates that these pages are subject to the page limitation for the Technical/Management Volume of our responses. Does this requirement include the past performance submissions from subcontractors whose subcontracts are expected to exceed \$500,000?

If so, we request that the inclusion of subcontractor past performance questionnaires as part of the page limited Technical/Management Volume be eliminated due to the potential variability in contractor team composition (i.e., teams with more subcontractors expected to exceed the \$500,000 limit will have fewer pages for other sections of the Technical/Management Volume.

Response: The RFP is amended to make past performance questionnaires exempt from the page count limitation. Offerors should still submit questionnaires for subcontractors exceeding \$500,000.

14. I would like clarification of the “consolidation by element” statement made under Clause I (A) (5) on page 11 of 16 of amendment 0001. The statement reads, “5. Whenever subcontractor effort is included in the proposed costs, the prime contractor shall include an additional supporting cost summary consolidating all costs (both contractor and subcontractor) by element for each contract period. Since subcontractors will be providing the prime contractor with fully burdened cost information, and providing the detailed propriety information in sealed packets that will be opened by EPA, this information will not be available to the prime at the cost element level. The prime contractor will know LOE by P-level and unburdened ODCs, however raw labor and indirect costs are considered proprietary and will not be privy to the prime contractor. Please provide clarification. Of this requirement.

Response: That paragraph is deleted by amendment to the RFP.

15. On page 10 of 16 in the amendment to the cost proposal instructions, (I) (A) (1), EPA has provided a breakdown of the of the spreadsheets that will be required in the proposal. One of the spreadsheets required in each contract period is one that details Optional Quantities. Does the Agency need a single optional quantity spreadsheet as well, in addition to the spreadsheet that provides information on the total incremental quantities? An example would be:

Total Contract Summary
Total Base Period (Includes base and optional quantities = 34,490LOE)
Base Period Quantity (11,490 LOE)
Base Period All Optional Quantities (23,000LOE)
Base Period Single Optional Quantity (1000 LOE)

This scenario would produce one spreadsheet for the Total Contract and four spreadsheets, for each contract period for a total of 21 spreadsheets, as opposed to the 16 spreadsheets outlined in the amendments.

Response: Good suggestion. The additional spreadsheets are requested for each period by amendment to the RFP.

16. The original RFP - Section L, Page L-15 of 30. Section B. Cost or Pricing Proposal Instructions (7) Team Subcontracts. The statement reads, "When the cost of a subcontract is substantial (5% of the total estimated contract dollar value or \$100,000, which ever is less), the offeror shall include the following subcontractor information:"

The amendment dated 07/28/03, Section B. Cost Proposal Instructions - Volume II Requirements, V. Subcontracts states the following, "When the cost of a subcontract is substantial (10% of the prime contractor's estimated contract value or \$10,000, which ever is less), include details of subcontract costs in the same format as the prime contractor's costs. Include a cost or price analysis of the subcontract costs."
Please verify the **percent** and **dollar value** the Government intends the contractor to use for preparing Cost Volume II.

Response: The instructions will be revised to read 5% of the contractor's estimated contract value or \$100,000.00., whichever is less.

Additionally, the responses to Questions previously posted in Amendment 0002 are revised as follows.
The RFP is being amended accordingly.

- Q.1 The Instructions for the Preparation of Proposals found in Section L.11 of the RFP indicate that offerors should respond to the Sample Work Assignments and prepare a work plan that describes how each plan will be accomplished. The RFP includes three (3) sample Work Assignments. Should offerors prepare and submit work plans for all three Work Assignments or just choose one?

A.1 Yes, offerors should respond to all three Sample Work Assignments.

Q.2 The Instructions for the Preparation of Proposals found in Section L.11 of the RFP has a list of things that should be included in the work plan. The Sample Work Assignments found in Attachment 2 each contain a “**Task 1**”, which stipulates a different list of what should be included in a work plan. Are offerors required to address the additional items found in Task 1 of the sample Work Assignments, specifically: detailed cost estimate by task and staffing plan? If a staffing plan is required, does it need to identify specific staff and hours by professional level?

A.2 When responding to the Sample Work Assignments, offerors should provide the information requested in both Section L.11 and in the Sample Work Assignments.

Q.3 Attachment 8 to the RFP, Past Performance Questionnaire, indicates that offerors should submit Part A of the Questionnaire as part of its Technical Proposal. Offerors could have dozens of relevant projects, taking up many valuable pages in the Technical proposal. In fact, the more relevant projects an offeror has, the fewer pages to respond to the other technical criteria remain. Would the Agency consider exempting these pages from the Technical Proposal count.

A.3 Past Performance Questionnaires are now exempt from the page limitations. Guidance in Amendment 0002 erroneously stated that such questionnaires should be received prior to the closing date of the RFP; however, that statement is rescinded. Questionnaires may be submitted in advance, or along with full proposal, by the closing date of the RFP.

Q.4 Amendment 0001 calls for an extension for the receipt of technical and cost proposals until September 3, 2003; however, block 11 of SF 30 indicates that the proposal due date has not been extended.

A.4 Noted. Amendment 0003 further extends the RFP closing/proposal due date to September 19, 2003 at 2:00 pm, local time. Block 11 of the SF 30 of Amendment 0003 reflects this extension to the RFP.